

Dr. Moshe J. Bernstein

The Orthodox Jewish Scholar and Jewish Scholarship: Duties and Dilemmas¹

At the outset of my remarks, I want to stress the highly impressionistic and personal nature of these comments. They are not the result of controlled observation, nor are they the result of a systematic comparison of my perspectives with those of colleagues, although I have certainly shared my thoughts on many of these issues with them. The context of these remarks is also significant: they were first delivered to a group composed primarily of undergraduates at Yeshiva University under the aegis of a program which has as its goal the clarification of some of the very significant issues which confront our sort of *yahadut* today (whether we call it “centrist” Orthodoxy or “modern” Orthodoxy is not critical).

Some of you may intend, in the future, to choose higher Jewish education as a career; others may want to understand what could ever motivate the former group to do that. Regardless, many may be confused by the terms used in the title of this essay, either by the term “Orthodox Jewish scholar,”² an oxymoron, a self-contradiction, indeed, to some academicians, or by the term “Jewish scholarship,” anathema to some *roshei yeshiva*! I will not define “scholarship” very precisely; for our purposes it simply means participation in higher education and in the intellectual arenas which are related to it, i.e., professional conferences, academic journals, and other publications employing the techniques which are accepted by consensus as appropriate to whatever discipline may be under consideration. The subjects studied might be *Tanakh*, Talmud, Jewish history, Jewish philosophy, or a variety of others much

less well-known, but they have in common their “Jewishness” and their inclusion in the arena of scholarly instruction and dialogue analogous to other religious literatures, national histories or philosophical traditions.

My goal in these comments is certainly not to promote Jewish academia as a career, although I find it personally rewarding, but rather to elaborate tentatively on some of the issues which need to be faced by those considering it. Most of you are probably aware that Jewish scholarship and Jewish higher education generally go hand in hand. It is the rare scholar who can carry out his or her research outside the ivory towers of the university. As for those of you who will continue to do serious research as high school teachers, *ashreikhem ve-ashrei talmideikhem*. If, in the course of my remarks, research-oriented scholarship gets shorter shrift than expected, I hope to elaborate on that aspect of the subject at another time in a different context.

I. Responsibilities of the Orthodox Scholar

As students at Yeshiva College, Stern College for Women, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, or Bernard Revel Graduate School, you have all been almost entirely insulated from most of what passes for higher Jewish education in America. Our institutions are *sui generis*, particularly unique, by virtue of their espousal of academic higher Jewish Studies within an avowedly traditional environment. So are you their students unique, by virtue of your commitment to Judaism, your training in Torah studies from an early age, and your unashamed admission that what motivates you to be involved in Jewish Studies as your major discipline is not the same as what motivates your dorm roommate to major in accounting or history, or what may motivate a Jewish Studies major at another college or university. I believe that *you* come to Jewish Studies because you consider them a natural outgrowth of *talmud Torah*, whether or not you believe that one should make a *birkat ha-Torah* over all of them. Higher Jewish education, *you* feel, is another arena for *himmukh*, even if its context is not the *bet midrash*. You may feel that any interest in academic higher Jewish learning only makes sense as a development of commitment to *yahadut* and hence you might not even be able to understand why anyone who is not as fully committed to *yahadut* as we are or who is not even Jewish at all would be interested in higher Jewish Studies, much less a career in them.

In point of fact, however, Jewish Studies in the United States is far from being an enclave of Orthodox Jews, a circumstance which allows “others” to become the acknowledged authorities in the “academic world” on the interpretation of texts which are near and dear to us. Many of them possess academic training which is grossly inadequate by

our standards. Nevertheless, we have not rushed to fill a vacuum which we all must agree is present in this realm. There can be many excuses for “our” non-participation in academic Jewish higher education: (1) an attitude of esotericism—“I can only teach Torah to Orthodox Jews in an Orthodox institution”; (2) an impugning of the sincerity of others’ desires to learn—“if you are not *frum*, you must have an ulterior motive, because you cannot really want to learn”;³ (3) a rejection of the scholarly methodology employed in academia—“this is not how we have always done it”; and (4) a dismissal of scholarship because of its non-spiritual nature—“Torah study is only valuable if it enhances one’s personal growth.” But these are not sufficiently valid reasons for maintaining our distance.

The responsibilities of the scholar are multiple, and those of the Jewish scholar even more so. Any scholar worth his or her salt has obligations to students and self, to the field of scholarship chosen and to his or her academic community. The Orthodox Jewish scholar, I believe, has those obligations and others: the responsibility to the larger Orthodox community, and the responsibility to students which goes beyond the formal-educational, which may be related to *hinnukh* and not to higher education.

The matter of the relationship of the Orthodox scholar in Jewish Studies to the broader Orthodox community deserves, I think, full and independent treatment, and was almost the formal topic of this lecture. Suffice it here to say that, with rare exceptions, there is clearly insufficient utilization of the talents and abilities of Jewish scholars in the ongoing education of adult members of our communities (I dislike the term “adult education programs”) once they have concluded their formal schooling. The professor as *ballebos* is a figure who has not yet found an appropriate place within Orthodoxy. The well-trained Orthodox scholar is both *ballebos* and more than *ballebos*. If he happens to be an ordained rabbi, his stature is enhanced in the Orthodox community (somewhat paradoxically, since for most scholars learning *Yoreh De’ah* does not contribute to their scholarship), as if *semikhab* somehow grants *hekhsher* to his academic work. For Orthodox women, of course, this option for the elevation of their status does not exist.

The “blame” for this situation probably lies with both the scholars and the community. Orthodox scholars of Jewish Studies are significant factors in communal intellectual activity when they realize that they bear a responsibility to bring back some of their intellectual wealth to their communities. Academicians can, and must, realize that the serious public lecture or class is the way that their skills, creativity and knowledge can be shared with an audience far broader than that of the graduate seminar. On the other hand, the community at large must learn that Ortho-

dox academicians, and not only *roshei yeshiva*, have something to contribute to their Jewish edification. It is partially the responsibility of the synagogue rabbinate to insure that this is acknowledged.

Whether there needs to be automatic tension between rabbi and professor, or school-principal and professor, is also a question which demands consideration. Unfortunately, many *rabbonim* have no idea what Jewish scholarship is, and simply follow their *roshei yeshiva*'s dictum that it is something "*maskilish*" and therefore "*treif*." They exacerbate the problem and create situations which, rather than integrating professional scholars into the communal structure, isolate them and make of them antagonists rather than allies. If, via the fostering of mutual respect, we can avoid the sharp, and perhaps unnecessary, bifurcation between scholar and *lamdan*, our communities and educational systems will be the richer for it.

The Orthodox scholar also has unique responsibilities to his or her student, and I must stress that I am not speaking here of the Jewish scholar who has the good fortune, as I and my colleagues at Yeshiva University do, to engage in his or her scholarship at an institution which is committed to both Torah and scholarship, and whose students are different from the students who will be confronted on other campuses in so many ways.⁴ (If you go out into this field, folks, you are not going to be teaching yourselves, on the whole. Of this I am certain, and of this you must be aware.) We receive our training at Yeshiva University, and often remain here to teach, sometimes never experiencing another academic institution from Yeshiva University High School to retirement (a very unhealthy intellectual situation, by the way). We are all cut from very similar cloth, so for us the ambience of the scholarly conference is an often-needed breath of fresh air away from the "sameness" of Yeshiva.

The issue of the Jewish responsibility of all Jewish academicians inclusively has been debated over the last two decades by Jewish scholars, both observant and non-observant, traditional and non-traditional, without resolution. Are professors of Jewish Studies to become surrogate rabbis on the college campuses where they teach? When Jewish Studies began to expand as a university academic discipline about twenty to twenty-five years ago, one of the fears held by its would-be practitioners was that in the modern secular university the professor of Jewish Studies would be perceived as "the rabbi" and would become a primary role model for the Jewish student. Robert Alter wrote that parents felt "Jewish scholarly presence on campus will . . . fill their children with Jewish knowledge and Jewish pride, save them from the Jesus Freaks, the Eastern gurus, the New Left, and (to be perfectly frank) from Gentile spouses."⁵ This aspect, or perhaps by-product, of Jewish scholarship should not frighten the Jewish scholar who is also religiously committed

as it might frighten the “pure” academician who is afraid of having his scholarly credentials called into question because an avowed interest in Judaism, or in the Jewishness of his or her students, may indicate a lack of objectivity in his or her scholarship.

On the other hand, participation in the academic world carries with it a certain set of responsibilities to intellectual inquiry which may preclude overly zealous non-academic concern for a student’s spiritual well-being.⁶ For the obligation of teachers (and perhaps *mehannekhem* as well in a different sense) is not only to present pat answers and easy solutions where they may be appropriate, but to depict dilemmas, difficulties and quandaries, while sharing with students the most suitable approaches to their solutions. Dogmatic responses to many questions are simply not appropriate in the university even in situations where they might be acceptable in a *bet midrash*.

The Orthodox Jew, whatever his or her academic discipline, is often a marked individual on college campuses, a symbol of traditional Jewish values and ideas, a rallying point for observant and semi-observant students when it comes to religious issues such as examinations on *yom tov* and the like. I myself have had this experience as an instructor of Classical Languages at the University of Illinois (Chicago) and at Franklin and Marshall College. I felt I was marked on the campus as the one who was wearing the *kippah*, and this even though I was not teaching Judaic Studies. (I should note that male Orthodox faculty usually stand out more than female ones as a result of the *kippah* factor).

Often, when all Jewish faculty members in the departments of Jewish Studies or religious studies are non-traditional, an Orthodox Jewish professor becomes the unofficial “official Orthodox Jew” on campus. Unfortunately, the Orthodox chemist or physicist, who may be a *lamdan* but is untrained in any other area of Jewish Studies, may at times create unnecessary friction with the less talmudically knowledgeable professors of Jewish Studies. He simply cannot regard their endeavor as being a serious one; he studied his chemistry or physics in the university, but learned his Torah in a *bet midrash* (or *beis medrash*), and cannot even understand what Jewish Studies are doing in the university. The animus and disdain of the *frum* chemist or physicist toward the non-observant scholar of religious studies broadens the gap between them, and often prevents their co-operation in non-academic spheres where it could have been very valuable. When one’s specialty is Jewish Studies, it gets both better and worse, I think, and the Orthodox scholar of Jewish Studies must often walk a narrower line than the Orthodox physicist or the non-orthodox Jewish Studies professor. We are perceived to be representatives of academic Judaism *and* of Orthodox Judaism, and therefore must be more responsible to both *and* to our scholarship.

II. Torah Study and Academic Method

What then of the “Jewish scholarship” of my title? I am not going to bother with a description of the difficulties of the aspiring Ph.D. in any area of humanistic studies, of which Jewish Studies is one, and I should stress that anyone who believes that he or she can enter higher Jewish education today without a Ph.D. is probably mistaken. This is true whether your specialty is history (whatever the period), Talmud, biblical studies, or philosophy. The need to be involved in scholarship must be part of the decision of anyone who enters Jewish higher education, as it need not be of the potential high school teacher or rabbi.⁷ This does not mean that I think rabbis or high school teachers should not continue to read and to grow as well, but they need not “publish or perish.”

The fact that being involved in higher Jewish education implies the necessity of being involved in academic scholarship may affect the potential scholar’s initial choice of field, as well as the subchoices which follow. And here I must begin with certain presuppositions: to paraphrase the Roman dramatist Terence, “*Iudaeus sum; nihil Iudaicum a me alienum puto* (I am a Jew and I think nothing Jewish is alien to me).”⁸ The options of the potential young scholar are indeed quite numerous. The study of all things Jewish is related to Torah, if, indeed, it is not itself Torah. Whether or not certain subject matter fits into the formal or informal traditional curriculum of *yeshivot* is beside the point; it is Jewish. Where its study resides in the hierarchy of learning values is a different question, but it still belongs there, somewhere. As a scholar, I may choose to study an area or a discipline which does not have a place in the classic *bet midrash*, and still see my work as *talmud Torah*. The notion that אין אדם לומד אלא במקום שלבו חפץ (‘*Avodah Zarah* 19a) also comes into play, in our endeavor to apply those skills with which God has endowed us in the most satisfactory and productive fashion, while at the same time maintaining our *yir’at shamayim*.

When we, committed Orthodox Jews, consider entering into the so-called arena of scholarship, we have already made a decision, theoretically at least, regarding it. We admit the validity of at least some of its methodology, the value of some of its results, and the significance of the challenges with which it occasionally confronts us. It should be obvious by now that when I speak of “Orthodox Jewish scholar,” I do not simply mean the well-educated *rosh yeshiva* who also speaks a language which is not that of the *bet midrash*. I refer specifically to the student who has been trained in classical Jewish texts and who has also mastered the tools of the initially alien world of humanistic scholarship, an alien world, because, in so many ways it does indeed differ from the realm of the *bet midrash*.

The texts we read in the library and the *bet midrash* (using them as metaphorical substitutes for scholarship and *lernen*) may be the same, but the questions which we ask of them differ, the vocabulary we employ in discussing them differs, the categories into which we place them differ, and (at first anyway) the reasons for which we read them differ. We learn biblical books, but study biblical narrative; we learn Talmud *la'asoqei shemateta aliba de-hilkbeta*, but we may study it to understand the social organization of Babylonian Jewry or the differences between them and the Jewry of Erez Yisrael; we learn *midrash aggadah* as spiritually edifying, but study it as reflections of a rabbinic worldview; we learn *she'elot u-teshuvot* as part of the halakhic process, but study responsa for inferential historical data, or as milestones in the history of the halakhah.⁹ I say "at first" because if we accept the possibility that Torah may be studied in many different ways, then the ultimate impetus in both circumstances may very well be *talmud Torah*, although it will be more classically recognizable in one instance than in the other.¹⁰

The methodology of the *bet midrash* is that developed in the yeshivot of Eastern Europe; the assumptions we make there are those which develop from the ones Jews have made throughout the ages; the hypotheses we suggest are tested against axioms which ultimately date back to Sinai. Our sacred texts are our textbooks; we do not, as a rule, have curricula; we learn *pasuk* by *pasuk*, *daf* by *daf*, *siman* by *siman*. Our analysis is frequently hyper-synchronically intertextual, treating all texts rather abstractly on a single plane and ignoring chronology and sequence, history and geography, internal dynamics and external influences. The act of learning, not its outcome or its result, can be its own reward. Participation in learning is also, by definition, participation in the religious life of the community and thus may be said to have a "devotional" as well as intellectual function.

The world of Jewish scholarship devotes itself to the study of some of the very same texts and materials which are learned in the *bet midrash*. There is doubtless a difference between the way in which people deal with a text and with a sacred text, even when the texts are one and the same, and one of the first dilemmas of the Orthodox Jewish potential scholar is how to minimize that dichotomy in one's own scholarly endeavor. But beyond that, it is clear that classical Torah study has a canon which is not recognized as such by Jewish scholarship: *Tanakh* and its rabbinic commentators, Talmud and its rabbinic commentators, *midrashim*, codes, responsa, and a selection from the philosophical and ethico-moral literature written by Jews throughout the ages. These are the inhabitants of the *bet midrash* bookshelf, while even such closely related works as grammatical treatises pertaining to Bible, a Crusade chronicle written by one of the *ba'alei ha-tosafot*, communal ordinances of Franco-German synods headed by leading rabbinic figures, or Jewish-

Christian polemic disputations do not quite “make it.”¹¹ This second group may be said to have some connection with the *bet midrash* bookshelf, whereas many other texts which are of historical value—*genizah* fragments of *ketubbot*, shopping lists and book lists, martyrologies and synagogue records, and, it goes without saying, anything written about canonical works by a non-Jew or a Jew whose Orthodox credentials are not impeccable—are completely excluded from the “canonical” curriculum.¹² The exposure to this much broader spectrum of primary material is one of the features which characterize the difference between *lernen* and scholarship.

The areas of study, the disciplinary boundaries, in the university curriculum are also very different from those in the yeshiva. For example, Jewish history, often ignored in yeshivot because, after all, *mai dahavah havah* and therefore it can have no implications or ramifications for religious observance beyond employment in a hortatory sermon, is a serious academic discipline.¹³ The same is true about Jewish sociology—how did Jews live and organize themselves, how did they view themselves and their neighbors? Why did they act as they did?

Even when studying the very same texts which may be current in the yeshiva, the academician may call them by different names, categorize them differently, and, most important, approach them with very different methodologies, assumptions and hypotheses from those of one learning in a yeshiva. Questions will be asked about those texts and of those texts which would be deemed unthinkable and unaskable in a yeshiva where the text being learned is an integral component of the faith community to which its students belong, and certain questions simply cannot be asked. Since the study of the text is a *mizvah*, the mode of its study, as well as the shape of its canon, is determined by Orthodox Judaism and its traditions. Whether the *beis medrash* be *Litvish* or *Hasidish*, and despite the differences which may characterize various *darkei ha-limmud*, there is a commonality between and among them which dichotomizes them sharply from the university classroom and library.

The scholar asks how texts which are treated as unities in the *bet midrash* were put together, what were the motivations of the author and what external considerations may have influenced him. While in the *bet midrash* there is a tendency to treat Jewish literary corpora as theologically and conceptually monolithic, in the library much is made of inconsistencies among texts within the same corpus. The *bet midrash* tends to harmonize and unify, and the library to dichotomize and pluralize. Contemporary data, names, dates and places, are treasures to the scholar, while they are often just so many trivial details to the *lamdan*.

Finally, the scholar of Jewish Studies, like that of any other academic discipline, must adopt a rather dispassionate stance toward the object of his investigation. Jewish Studies—the study of Judaism as a religion, the

history of the Jewish people, the history of Jewish literature/literature written by Jews—must be performed in the same way as are the study of Japanese religion, the history of the Armenians, or the literature of the Greeks and Romans. Beyond our obvious interest in the material, as scholars we can claim no special privileges for it over and above any other.¹⁴

I should note that it is not profitable, for our purposes, to indulge in scholarship bashing, pointing out either the absurd results obtained by some so-called scholarship, or its fabled sterility or aridity, or the lack of its contribution to one's spiritual development.¹⁵ If one chooses to engage in scholarship as a profession, it is with the full foreknowledge that those phenomena may be encountered. Furthermore, being a Jewish academician does not imply "belief" in a list of dogmas in which all Jewish academicians believe, and the individual scholar may find, on a personal level, a variety of ways to counteract this apparently negative aspect of academe. Finally, academic study of things Jewish may have a positive value despite its lack of overt spirituality if the examination of our traditions leads ultimately to an examination of ourselves, although that ought not be the primary reason one engages in the discipline. But, there too, *de gustibus non disputandum est* (= *al ta'am va-reah ein le-hitvakeah*).

In many ways, Jewish scholarship is the ultimate area where we must confront the issues of Torah u-Madda constantly, almost by definition. When we juxtapose Torah with the *madda* of scholarship in this sphere, we cannot escape the tensions generated. And the stakes are higher, at times, than they are in the Orthodox scientist's consideration of the age of the universe or the theory of evolution because the disciplinary playing field of the conflict is Torah itself, not science. The clash, if it is viewed as such, is not between Torah and science, but within Torah. All fields of Jewish scholarship are affected by our stance vis-a-vis Torah u-Madda, and we cannot attempt to enter into the realm of scholarship unless we are prepared to confront its dilemmas as well as benefit from its "positive" results.

I often tell the story about a friend of mine, a *musmakh* of a moderate right-wing yeshiva, possessor of a Ph.D. (in the sciences, of course) who once very proudly asserted to me that the discoveries in the Judean desert known as the Dead Sea Scrolls showed that both Rashi and Rabbenu Tam *tefillin* existed in ancient times. When I queried him regarding the biblical texts found in the same caches as the *tefillin*, and their variance from the Masoretic text, he replied that they were obviously placed there for *genizah* since they were *pasul*. There is clearly no place for this form of intellectual dis- or non-honesty. We cannot choose to employ Torah u-Madda in Jewish scholarship selectively; we must admit the dilemmas it may raise as well as the solutions with which it may furnish us. We

cannot jump for joy over the finding of Rabbenu Tam's *tefillin* from such an early date, and ignore the other materials which were found side-by-side with them.

The positions at either end of a spectrum are always easiest to defend, and I admit that, in theory at least, one should not enter only half-way from the *bet midrash* into the library. We should attempt to integrate our Torah and our *madda* in the study of Torah as fully as possible. In practice, however, we all limit our entries in a variety of ways; we all have issues which we have tacitly agreed not to touch. As a result, we must always be aware of our "compromised" status. I have much more sympathy for those who reject the library completely than for those who pick and choose without admitting that that is what they are doing. Such "scholars" give an unfortunately skewed perspective on scholarship and its results to those who follow their lead.

III. Choosing a Specialty

There is no doubt that men and women who have advanced training in traditional Jewish texts may have a very significant contribution to make in a variety of the disciplines which constitute Jewish scholarship. They have, after all, been reading from age six or seven texts which others begin to read as advanced undergraduates or even graduate students. And there is no substitute for that head start; it is still easier to learn scholarly method at age nineteen or twenty-three than to catch up on twelve years of classical Jewish education. The choice of discipline within Jewish scholarship can also be affected by one's early background and training.

In the academic sphere, the election of field, and occasionally of subfield, is unfortunately a necessity. We *all* find ourselves interested in *all* aspects of Jewish Studies to greater or lesser degrees, a young graduate student commented to me, and there is no doubt that our predisposition to consider all fields as manifestations of Torah, and our understanding, or at least our suspicion, that they are all related somehow, tends to broaden us.¹⁶ But one can simply not keep up with the scholarly literature in certain areas of Jewish Studies unless that is one's full-time job. Nevertheless, we are all interested in what our colleagues do, and that is helpful both to us and to them. We are valuable to others to have as colleagues, since the breadth of our interests encourages us to participate in an exchange of ideas even in areas where we ourselves might not be doing our research.

At first glance, the choice of area of specialization in scholarship should seem to depend only on the skills and inclinations of the potential scholar. What we actually find in the world of scholarship is somewhat

different. A good number of Orthodox scholars are involved in aspects of medieval Jewish history and philosophy, particularly in those areas of history which demand the heavy utilization of responsa literature and the like. Years of talmudic study, when accompanied by appropriate “scholarly” methodology and training, enable the student with yeshiva background to excel at those aspects of the field which cannot be handled as well by his non-traditionally trained colleague, and the scholar himself can view the time spent on his research as that much more *talmud Torah*; his profession and his *kiyyum ha-mizvah* coincide.¹⁷

It is less common to find Orthodox Jews, in American universities at least, studying Judaism in late antiquity, particularly the history of the Second Commonwealth. Somehow, that crucial period, and particularly the era from the Maccabees to the *hurban*, seems to keep traditionally-minded students away. The issues central to it, such as the historical veracity of rabbinic sources, the chronological contradictions between rabbinic and other primary sources, and the nature and development of the Oral Law, are too “hot” to confront, because they are held, somewhat incorrectly I think, to impinge upon areas of both belief and practice.

From an historical perspective, the idealized portrait, found in rabbinic sources of the talmudic period, of religious life in *bayit sheni*, is not borne out by the primary sources of the period itself. While the Sadducees and the *‘ammei ha-arez* make their appearances in the pages of the Talmud, the overall picture is clearly one of a dominant Pharisaic-rabbinic group and the “others.” The multifarious expressions of Judaism in late *bayit sheni* are but dimly reflected in *Ḥazal*. There is a reluctance on the part of the traditionally-trained potential historian of *bayit sheni* to abandon the comfortable outline drawn in the rabbinic sources and to confront the “goyishe” and “non-frum Jewish” material which present a rather different view. Even that talmudic material which deals with issues of sectarianism, like later rabbinic sources indicating lack of observance within the established Jewish community, tends to be downplayed. We tend not to be interested in those phenomena which disturb the ideal chain of tradition and observance which is portrayed by “normative” historiography.

The resolution to this “problem” probably lies in the distinction between the academic discipline, history, and the literary artifact, Talmud. They are not commensurate, and the latter, for the historian, is but one more primary source for the former. Denial that the Talmud is the *only* source for the history of the preceding eras is not by any means a failure in *emunat ḥakhamim*. *Ḥakhmei ha-Talmud* were not intent on providing historical data and are therefore not to be expected to provide historical accuracy. A more significant difficulty for the prospective graduate student in classical Jewish history might be the attitude of some

scholars in the field who, even granted the option, might be reluctant to define certain research issues in terms which are palatable to the traditional student. The solution: choose your graduate school and your mentors carefully.

Because the acceptance of the *halakhah* by its transmitters since the talmudic period is a given of Orthodox life, it is believed that, if a study of the origins and history of that *halakhah* might lead one to question that version of halakhic developments, it should not be undertaken. There is probably no compelling need for scholarship to affect practice, since they are two separate, perhaps non-intersecting, systems which employ distinct methodologies. If it were to affect practice at all, it would have to be by a gradual consensus of the world of Orthodox decisors that the results of scholarship are to be included in the process of *psak*, but that path from the library back to the *bet midrash* is still rarely traveled.¹⁸

The closely-related discipline of talmudic study, a natural for our traditionally-trained scholar, also finds few adherents. Except for the brave few, any attempt to apply modern methodology to the study of the Talmud is eschewed and is abandoned to scholars, many, although not all, of whom can barely read a rabbinic text, much less make a *leynen*. Once again, it is the apprehension of what a scholarly approach to the study of Talmud might engender which makes the field taboo: the fear that a piece of *lomdus* will be rendered “unnecessary,” or (far worse) incorrect, by the modern approach; the fear that our traditional system of *psak halakhah* will be corrupted.¹⁹ Once again, we must stress that the goals of *lomdus* and of modern scholarship are not identical, and that the methodologies which they employ on the same texts are, at times, very dichotomous. The former is analytical and synchronic, the latter historical and diachronic.²⁰ They are not diametrically opposed, but may lead separate and parallel existences as different manifestations of Torah. The same student may at different times and in different contexts find himself employing both of them, although not necessarily simultaneously; the choice of one is not the rejection of the other.²¹

Roshei yeshiva, even those in the “centrist” camp, often discourage their students from entering the scholarly field of Talmud (like those of *bayit sheni* and Bible), reminding them how many talmudic scholars of the Enlightenment were seeking only to undermine Orthodoxy with their researches.²² They do not point out that not all talmudic scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were religious reformers—such names as Rabbis Yizhak Isaac Halevy, David Zevi Hoffmann, Zev Yavetz, Yehiel Yaakov Weinberg and Zevi Hirsch Chayes come to mind.²³ But the words of the *roshei yeshiva* carry inordinate weight with their *talmidim*, with the result that many Orthodox American yeshiva students do not enter the field of talmudic studies, even if they do choose academic

Jewish Studies as a career. Would it not be more appropriate if properly trained *bnei* or *bnot Torah* were to exercise their intellects, with the appropriate accompanying *yir'at shamayim*, in the “scientific” study of Talmud? The work of the *gedolim* mentioned earlier should give the contemporary potential scholar models to emulate, and his/her *rebbe* much less to fear.

Before turning my attention to a discussion of my own discipline, biblical studies, I should like to focus for a moment, by way of preface to the next section, on a phenomenon which distinguishes talmudic studies (and to a lesser degree Jewish historical research) from biblical studies. The question of one’s interlocutors in scholarly dialogue is an issue which should not go unnoticed, and the participants in talmudic research are almost exclusively Jewish. The Jewish scholars whose papers you hear and read, whose books you review, may not be as observant as you are, and, as Orthodox Jews, you may not comprehend why a non-observant Jew is at all concerned with this, but they are at least members of the same faith community reading the canonical texts of that community, so that there is some common ground between you and them beyond the merely academic.

In biblical studies, on the other hand, most of the participants in academic scholarship are not Jewish, and the Orthodox (and sometimes even the non-Orthodox) Jew can, as a result, feel even more alienated if he views his work as related to his religious identity. The very notion, in fact, of including Bible in a discussion of the field of Jewish Studies is considered peculiar by many scholars, both Jewish and non-Jewish.²⁴ Geography likewise has an impact on audience and interlocutors. In general, Jewish Studies in America is populated heavily by Jewish practitioners, whereas, by contrast, I should venture that half of the participants at the European Association for Jewish Studies meetings (which include visiting Israelis) are non-Jews. The scholarly language which one speaks, despite our protestations that there is but one language of scholarship, may vary slightly depending upon the identity and characteristics of the audience to whom one is speaking.

IV. Biblical Studies

The term “Orthodox Jewish Bible scholar” is more of an oxymoron than “Orthodox Jewish scholar”; it is almost a self-contradiction.²⁵ We are simply believed not to exist.²⁶ As I have noted above, my interlocutors in scholarly dialogue are very often not Jewish, even in my own primary subdiscipline of biblical studies, the *targumim*, which would seem to be a naturally Jewish area because of its proximity to rabbinic Judaism and literature. I should venture to say that a majority of the people who

attend the same session as I do of the Aramaic Studies Section of the Society of Biblical Literature, for example, are not Jewish. Once again I draw attention to the somewhat different tones of papers in Bible at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies where one may actually hear a *midrash* or a *rishon* cited, and at the equivalent sessions at the Society of Biblical Literature where seldom is heard an encouraging word. . . . Bible means something different to the Christian scholar than it does to the Jewish one, even the non-observant, and Bible *is* one thing to an Orthodox Jew and something else to a non-Orthodox one.

Why then, or how then, should the Orthodox Jew enter biblical scholarship as a discipline? Here, too, I can only suggest a variety of approaches which may supply the beginnings of an answer. First of all, mastery of the field of biblical scholarship, like any other field, need not carry with it religious adherence or intellectual commitment to all aspects of the consensus in the field. You must master all parts of it, in some limited sense, even if you do not teach it all. It is very easy for me to say this, because (1) I teach at Yeshiva University and (2) my subspecialties are "kosher." There is more of a problem if you teach at other universities, and your interests lie not as mine do in Targum, literary approaches to *Tanakh*, Dead Sea Scrolls and the history of Jewish biblical interpretation. The student, for example, of the legal material in the Pentateuch simply cannot operate in the scholarly arena without confronting source- or redaction-criticism. The student of pentateuchal narratives or of biblical history or religion will face similar obstacles.

Orthodox scholars who are interested in Bible have generally taken one of two routes.²⁷ Those who have taken the first have become scholars of Semitic languages, especially the biblical ones, where they contribute indirectly to modern biblical scholarship with their creativity in biblical lexicography, syntax, and the like. Such Orthodox scholars never need "dirty their hands" with Wellhausen, or confront the documentary hypothesis face-to-face; they never need question the fact that their view of the Bible as Orthodox Jews is rooted in an attitude dramatically opposed to the scholarly consensus. (To be complete, I must refer parenthetically at this point to the idiosyncratic view of Rabbi Mordechai Breuer who bases his original research in Torah on an Orthodox view of the documentary hypothesis.²⁸)

The second route is to become students of the history of Jewish biblical interpretation (*parshanut ha-mikra*), whether in the earliest period, within *Tanakh* itself, the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls (which, being deviant, are "safe"), the targumim and midrashim (insofar as certain aspects of midrash are interpretations of the Bible and not reflections of the intellectual worldview of *Hazal*), or of the medieval or modern period. We (and I find myself belonging, at least partially, to this latter group) are as much intellectual historians as we are students of the Bible.

We study what others have said about the Bible, not the divine word itself. There is no doubt that, for a Jew, the study of *Tanakh* ought to include the study of how Jews have studied *Tanakh*, but it cannot be to the exclusion of the study of *Tanakh* itself. The student of *parshanut* alone is, at best, an incomplete student of *Tanakh*.

But there are trends evident in the recent study of Bible which offer both other options for the student of *Tanakh* in the traditional mode and other alternatives for the Orthodox potential biblical scholar. The so-called literary approach which has grown in prestige over the last fifteen years is particularly attractive, so much so that some frightened hyper-Wellhausenians consider practitioners of the literary method to be “crypto-fundamentalists.”²⁹ In this approach, the biblical text is generally treated as an organic entity (as a traditional Jew would view it), but is subjected to a new series of questions, pertaining both to its form and to its meaning.

Contemporary biblical scholarship has come to accept that many books, or parts of books, in *Tanakh* are literature in the popular sense of the term, and must be analyzed as such. Questions are directed at the text which never concerned scholars of an earlier generation: What are the esthetic principles on which the text is based? What are the devices which the author employs in the production of his work which can make it successful or unsuccessful from a literary perspective? Many of the goals of the so-called literary approach, in its several manifestations, involve a firmer understanding of *peshuto shel mikra*, a goal with which many, if not all, classical Jewish exegetes would be in strong agreement.

Modern scholarship’s contribution to the פשטות המתחדשים בכל יום³⁰ has been, in part, the terminology which marks the distinctions among the subtleties of *peshat*, and which establishes or defines new areas for the investigation of the operation of *peshat*. The definition of *peshat* has not changed, but its spectrum has been expanded. Preliminary movement toward this kind of analysis of biblical literature is to be found already in the *rishonim*, but modern scholarship has developed a more precise language for its evaluation. Thus the medieval exegetes recognized parallelism as the dominant feature of biblical poetry, but contemporary biblical study has gone further in focusing on varieties of parallelism, the formality of its word pairs, and its meaning-laden functions. Hazal often responded to “literary” features in the narrative text (although they often treated them midrashically), while modern scholars have emphasized the same features in a systematic, less *ad hoc*, fashion.³¹ It is certain that close reading of the text, buttressed, I should add, by the employment of traditional Jewish exegetes whose textual sensitivity easily rivals that of the modern reader, commends itself to the traditional Jewish reader, whether he be Bible scholar or *ballebos*.³² And, for the scholar, it

furnishes a sub-discipline in biblical studies where he/she can be creative while remaining faithful to traditional principles.

And if the text studied happens to be in *Nakh* and not Torah, so much the better, because there is a sense, admittedly not shared by all, that some of the theological strictures on potential scholarship in Torah (such as, for example, the notion of *Torah mi-Sinai* and the unique quality of *nevu'at Moshe*) do not confine one in *Nakh*. The dating and the authorship of Samuel or Isaiah or Psalms is not as dogmatically significant, in the eyes of many, as the dating and the authorship of the Pentateuch; the variant readings of those texts found in the Dead Sea Scrolls are also probably less troublesome than pentateuchal variants would be.³³

Uriel Simon describes an approach to the study of *Tanakh* which distinguishes in this way between the analysis of Torah and that of *Nakh* as follows: בעוד שלגבי יתר חלקי המקרא אנו מבקשים שכר על הדרישה, הרי ביעור שלגבי יתר חלקי המקרא אנו מבקשים שכר על הדרישה, הרי לגבי התורה שומה עלינו להסתפק בשכר על הפרישה,³⁴ which I should paraphrase as “Just as we are rewarded for approaching the text in an academic fashion until this point (while we study *Nakh*), we are rewarded also for abandoning our academic approach from this point on (i.e., when we begin studying Torah).” He discusses how Orthodox scholars at Bar Ilan University confront the problem of biblical scholarship and biblical studies, and I recommend it to you as another set of thoughts on this issue.

I am, however, not comfortable with Simon’s smooth formulation, as if Torah does not merit or is exempt from our most searching analysis; I merely present it as a sample of what others have written on the issue under consideration. My reservation is, in an approximation of the formulation of my colleague Rabbi Shalom Carmy, if you avoid big issues because they are touchy, you will deal only with little issues. I am certain that we cannot abandon the big issues; I am less certain of how to deal with them.

Rabbi Mordechai Breuer, mentioned above in passing, has made a courageous attempt to deal with the manifold difficulties raised by biblical scholarship regarding the authorship of the Pentateuch. He accepts the division into “sources” as argued by the modern critics since the time of Wellhausen, and then proceeds to “demonstrate” that they are variegated manifestations of God’s multifaceted communication with man. He thus accepts both the methodology and presuppositions of the critics. He differs from them only in that, to use Rabbi Breuer’s own metaphor, for the critics “R” is the final Redactor of the text, while for Rabbi Breuer it is *Ribbono shel ‘Olam*.

I consider this approach very awkward from several perspectives. First of all, from the standpoint of tradition, I believe that Breuer concedes too much to the now somewhat dated presuppositions of the source critics regarding the way in which we expect literature to be composed. Because

he assumes the argumentation of the critics to be stronger than I feel it is, from his perspective we therefore must either accept the conclusions of the critics or come up with a different answer to explain the same set of phenomena which lead the critics to those conclusions. His own solutions, at times, are *teruzim* rather than answers, and leave the Orthodox reader who is unwilling to accept them with a spectrum of apparently unrefuted source critical *kashes*.³⁵ Second, from the standpoint of method, Breuer's approach is methodologically problematical because he is committed to the results he will achieve before he starts, and, more significantly, can brook no answer other than his own. As a result, his own responses are not tested for validity and plausibility against any other. Third, and this is perhaps more debatable than the other two, Breuer's research program may be overly determined by the problems he sees raised by scholarship, not by the problems produced by the text per se. This may divert our attention from its proper focus, the biblical text.

If, then, Breuerian methodology is not the answer, how ought we approach the discipline in such a fashion that we do not deal only with insignificant issues? I venture the beginnings of a response with a certain amount of diffidence. The Orthodox Jew who chooses to enter the center court of biblical scholarship, and is unwilling to play on the side courts of philology, medieval *parshanut* or targumim, must be aware of all the parameters of the discipline of critical biblical scholarship. We must study the biblical text with our own open eyes and endeavor to respond to all of the problems with which it presents us. Scholarly methodology may sensitize us to and enable us to discern difficulties which, if perceived at all in the earlier tradition of Jewish commentary, were not dealt with frontally and systematically. The very different vantage point of critical scholarship, unbiased by our presuppositions, but burdened by its own, provides an unaccustomed, and often valuable, perspective to the traditional reader of *Tanakh*.

On the other hand, we have axioms more precious to us than those of scholarship. There are conclusions of scholarship which might come into conflict with some of those axioms, but that is not a reason for rejecting scholarship a priori. It is frequently the presuppositions of scholarship, not its method, which generate these difficulties, and we perhaps, therefore, should make a distinction between acceptance of scholarly methodology and acceptance of scholarly presuppositions.³⁶ We may choose to follow its method, striving for *peshat* with all of the tools of modern research,³⁷ while choosing our own presuppositions. When presuppositions and method lead to theologically difficult conclusions, we are left with *zarikh 'iyyun gadol*, an uncomfortable, but not unprecedented, posture, and one which I prefer considerably over Breuer's often forced reconciliations or Simon's *bakkashat sakhar 'al ha-perishah*.

The Orthodox graduate student or young scholar who feels a genuine urge to work in areas where the sets of presupposition clash must be aware of the potential pitfalls, spiritual and academic, of such research. He or she must be prepared, according to my view, to conclude *zarikh 'iyyun gadol* or the equivalent, and to step back, spiritually whole. On the other hand, if none of us takes the risk, a lot of disturbing, unanswered, big questions are going to remain just that. When some bold scholar takes the risk and reaps the reward of finding the answer to one of those questions, we will all find ourselves in his or her debt.³⁸

The discipline of biblical studies, as a whole, is certainly open to the Orthodox scholar. I stressed the selection of appropriate subspecialties because our inclinations, our skills, our spiritual courage, and our psyches are not identical. We may choose which books of the Bible we shall study if we do literary work, our philology in no way is inferior to that of others, and the history of Jewish biblical interpretation presents us with fertile territory for our scholarship. If the prospective scholar can find the area in academic activity suitable for him or her, then the problems which he or she will have to confront actively become those of atmospherics or of perceptions, and not of substance.

In a certain sense, participation in biblical studies by Orthodox scholars is a necessary part of the reclamation of the study of *Tanakh* for the canon of traditional Jewish study. Barry Levy does not exaggerate much when he writes that “for the Orthodox Jew, the rabbinic tradition, with its suggestive interpretations and binding applications, is in many ways more a part of Bible study than are some scriptural books.”³⁹ There must be serious study of *Tanakh* in Orthodox environments, and to pretend that serious study is possible today without taking cognizance of the contributions of modern scholarship is naive, or, far worse, self-delusive. Introducing some of the methodology and fresh perspective of contemporary biblical research may stimulate our own thinking and revitalize Orthodox study of *Tanakh*.⁴⁰

V. Conclusion

If we can do scholarship properly, then we have a responsibility to do it; it is no longer a *reshut*, it may become a *hovah*.⁴¹ Yes, we must engage in a dialogic relationship with others who think and believe differently from the way we do; there is much that we can learn from them—how to read old texts in new ways, and how to ask questions we never considered; that is part of what Rashbam speaks of when he refers to *peshatot ha-mithaddeshim bekhof yom*. There is much also that we can teach others from our unique perspective. And there is much in the world of scholarship which we can translate easily into the world of traditional learning,

which will, in the long run, be of benefit to ourselves and to our students. Of course, until the world of the *bet midrash* learns the language of the library (or vice versa, if relevant), then, where appropriate, we will have to engage in terminological transformation as well, but eventually our two worlds of learning will be able to share, in part, a common language as well.

Another area where common language, when developed, will be indispensable, is one upon which we touched briefly in Section I above. The recognition and acknowledgment of the importance of Jewish scholarship produced by Orthodox Jews in all disciplines can have a desirable effect on the larger (centrist) Orthodox community. We have here a framework, perhaps unlike the economic one, where the “trickle-down” effect can actually work. If *rabbonim* realize that there can be a natural alliance between them and Orthodox Judaica scholars, and scholars cease to view rabbis as narrow-minded and undereducated, the education of Orthodox laity can be greatly enhanced.

The strengths of rabbi and academician are often complementary. Scholars can present their insights in “popular,” non-university, fora, or rabbis may choose to frame them in more classical modes of Torah study. The rabbi can often teach the scholar how to be less tendentious in his interaction with that non-university audience which is, nonetheless, eager to learn. But co-operation is of the essence. Such reintegration of *Wissenschaft* produced by Orthodox Jews into Orthodox Jewish intellectual life will recapture and reshape its *madda* as Torah. Orthodox *ballebatim* will then no longer have to choose between hostile critical scholarship, on the one hand, and semi-propagandistic pseudo-scholarship, on the other, for the satisfaction of their intellectual curiosity about areas outside of classical Torah study.

Two canons must continuously guide us: first and foremost *yir'at shamayim*. Our *reshit hokhmah*, the foundation of our scholarship and research must be our *yir'at Hashem* (Psalms 111:10), a true sense of respect and reverence for our texts, their transmitters and their interpreters. “Care and caution and, above all, genuine humility, both religious and intellectual, are called for in dealing with sensitive areas of study.”⁴² Second, we must have a sense of honesty about that which we do and how we do it. Our stance must be one of objectivity along with a passionate concern, one more in our series of oxymorons; we must simultaneously be more than objective and more than engaged. We are Orthodox, but our scholarship should carry no identifying adjective; our interests are generated by who we are, but our research should not betray that fact. We may speak one language in our traditional framework and another in academe, but we must continue to bridge the gap between them with dialogue.

And where dialogue is not possible for us in the academic forum, where the conceptual parameters of scholarly discourse simply do not conform to principles we hold dear (the issue of *Torah mi-Sinai*, for example), we must admit it, but we ought not raise artificial barriers which prevent communication where such communication is appropriate. And if there is occasionally a nagging question which scholarship raises, we all know that questions, to borrow the Yiddish proverb, are rarely fatal. This is true of all disciplines in Jewish Studies. And perhaps if enough of us spend enough time thinking about enough questions, some of them and some of us may find their answers.

NOTES

1. This essay was delivered originally as a club-hour lecture under the aegis of the Torah u-Madda Project in May, 1989. Although edited, expanded and disfigured with notes, it maintains a significant proportion of its original informal and oral context and language. In particular, some of the first and second person style of the lecture presentation has not been modified very much, and I hope that the reading audience will be tolerant of this feature.

I should like to thank, among others, Dr. David Shatz, Rabbi Shalom Carmy and Rabbi Alan Brill of Yeshiva University, Dr. David Berger of Brooklyn College and Yeshiva University, and Dr. Jacob J. Schacter, the editor of this journal, for their critical comments on earlier drafts of this article. A number of unnamed *talmidim-haverim* at Yeshiva also made significant contributions to my revisions.

During my rewriting of the final version of this paper, the Orthodox Forum, sponsored by Dr. Norman Lamm, had as the subject of its fourth conference on November 17–18, 1991, “Modern Scholarship in the Study of Torah: Contributions and Limitations,” under the chairmanship of my colleague Rabbi Shalom Carmy. I have thus had access to the thoughts of some of my colleagues, in preliminary formulations, on issues which I had treated in my oral presentation, and shall occasionally make reference to their work in its tentative form. The final version of the Forum papers will be in the form of a collection of essays edited by Rabbi Carmy.

It would be hubristic to presume that my comments in this essay answer, or even ask, all of the questions which are generated by its title. There are probably issues which are treated insufficiently and others which I have perhaps not acknowledged at all in my formulation. Furthermore, since this essay covers a variety of subjects, it is certain that, at times, my broad brushstrokes could be touched up to advantage by a more nuanced analysis which would focus more closely on one or more of the individual topics discussed. I intend that my remarks be read as a contribution to an important, and hopefully ongoing, dialogue of many voices.

2. I shall not define, for the moment, what “Orthodox” means. For most of our discussion, an instinctive and impressionistic definition will be satisfactory. The issue of definition will surface briefly in our discussion of biblical studies in Section IV below.
3. This objection is not the same as the prohibition to teach a *talmid she-eino hagun*, although the rabbinic dictum might be employed as a more pious form of the argument.
4. The students at Yeshiva University are all Jewish, all Orthodox (or something close to it), and all have chosen to attend an institution where Jewish Studies is a

- mandatory portion of the curriculum, many *because* of that component of the curriculum.
5. Robert Alter, "What Jewish Studies Can Do," *Commentary* 58 (October, 1974): 74.
 6. I should certainly not assert that the classical *mehannekh* who is concerned for his/her student's *neshamah* will automatically adopt the glib approach to difficulties, or that the intellectual honesty which is demanded in the *bet midrash* would allow the sweeping of real problems under the rug. But I do believe that there exists a tendency to "fudge" a little bit more when confronted with problems which have no easy solutions, particularly when the perception of the educator is that without some answer the student will experience a spiritual crisis.
 7. It can be argued, and has been by the editor of this journal, "The Rabbi as Judaica Scholar," in *The Rabbinate as Calling and Vocation: Models of Rabbinic Leadership*, ed. B. Herring (Northvale, 1991), 167-75, that to be effective as a rabbi one must be involved in scholarship. Although I tend to agree in principle, I also suspect that this is a point of view not shared, either in theory or in practice, by a majority of Orthodox *rabbanim*. Furthermore, the degree of involvement in scholarship of which I speak here is beyond that which Dr. Schacter would demand or desire of all but a few pulpit rabbis.
 8. Professor David Berger indicated to me that Samuel David Luzzatto preceded me in this classical borrowing.
 9. Cf. H. Soloveitchik, *She'elot u-Teshuvot ke-Makor Histori* (Jerusalem, 1990).
 10. For a lengthy halakhic discussion, some of which is directly related to the subject of this essay, of many of the parameters of *talmud Torah*, see Aharon Kahn, "li-Kviat ha-Hefza shel Torah be-Mizvat Talmud Torah" ("The Subject Matter in the Commandment of Talmud Torah"), *Beit Yosef Sha'ul: Studies in Halacha by the Joseph and Caroline Gruss Kollel Elyon Post-Graduate Institute* 3 (1989): 305-403. It is not clear whether many of the negative statements made by rabbinic authorities through the ages about any sort of "learning" in a non-classical mode have any applicability at all to the sort of scholarship at which my remarks are directed. I suspect that the possibility of genuinely committed Jews engaging in novel modes of studying Torah as *talmud Torah lishmah* and *leshem mizvah* never entered the consideration of earlier *poskim*. The expansion of the range of what constitutes *talmud Torah*, which may ultimately depend on the mindset of the student, is to a certain degree a product not of anything resembling *haskalah*, but of the growth and development of fundamentally Jewish interests and concerns for all things Jewish, and it needs to be confronted anew halakhically in light of that fact. Too many discussions of the propriety and permissibility of a variety of these issues derive from a counter-polemic and counter-attack against the inroads of the more pernicious aspects of *haskalah* and Reform, and are simply not germane to the evaluation of Jewish scholarship performed by *shlomei emunei Yisrael*.
 11. Of course, the canonicity of a book is sometimes defined by its cover; we may thus ask whether Rabbi Chavel's inclusion of Nahmanides' disputation in the now "standard" edition of his writings "canonizes" it? This suggestion, that the covers of the book wherein a text appears are significant, is not offered tongue-in-cheek. In my own discipline of targumic studies, for example, it is only the texts of Onkelos, "Yerushalmi" and "Yonatan" on the Pentateuch which are "suitable" *bet midrash* material. The complete Erez Yisrael targum which goes by the name of Neofiti and the many Genizah fragments now available in M. Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum* (Hoboken, 1986) are "extra-canonical" (although the inclusion of Neofiti as תרגום ירושלמי השלם in later volumes of *Torah Shelemah* by R. M.M. Kasher, will eventually bring it "in"). Yet in order to understand the nature of targumic traditions and interpretations, the full corpus
-

of textual material must be utilized by either the classical *lamdan* or university scholar. The situation of these “newly-found” targumim, which have no ramifications *le-ma’aseh*, is analogous to that of those *rishonim* whose manuscripts lay unknown through the centuries until they were found and published during the 20th century. The case of the *rishonim*, of course, is of more practical significance since, having been once excluded from the halakhic process, it is claimed by some rabbinic authorities that they must remain in that state, while others would employ them in decision-making. On this issue, see further the materials in the articles of S.Z. Leiman and D. Sperber cited below, n. 18.

12. If I have exaggerated here, it is only slightly. How many classical *batei midrash* even contain concordances or indices to the corpus of classical rabbinic literature, works whose usefulness to the traditional *lamdan* would be hard to gainsay? We could argue whether the canon consists of the books on the *bet midrash* shelf, or of the books traditionally studied in the *bet midrash*. The former is a somewhat more generous selection; not everything allowed into the *bet midrash* gets studied there.
13. Jacob J. Schacter makes the point with reserved understatement, “The discipline of history was never a priority for great Torah scholars.” (“Haskalah, Secular Studies, and the Close of the Yeshiva of Volozhin in 1892,” *The Torah u-Madda Journal* 2 (1990): 110; cf. his further citation of the words of R. Hayyim ‘Ozer Grodzinski on that page.) In addition to the reasons I have presented for the absence of history from the traditional Torah curriculum, another very significant contemporary rationale is adduced by Dr. Schacter in the aforementioned essay. The view of Rabbi Shimon Schwab (cited p. 111) is that because “history must be truthful” in order to be history, it cannot gloss over faults, flaws, failures, shortcomings, and inadequacies of those who made it, even if they were our elders, sages and leaders. There has developed, nevertheless, in recent years a fundamentalist, neo-Orthodox historiography, which has as its goal the imitation of “standard” historical writing, but which carries a strong triumphalist subcurrent of such themes as the proof of God’s “obvious” involvement (*hashgahah*) in Jewish history. This sort of theologically conditioned historiography often operates with the assumption “So it was, so it is, and so it always will be,” in a variety of ways, and is, as a rule, at best anhistorical in its analysis. At worst, its revisionism produces blatant untruth. The success of such works in influencing the larger Jewish community should frighten serious centrist Orthodox scholars into counterattack, or at least counter-production.
14. There is no doubt that when ethnic studies began to proliferate in the 1960’s and 1970’s, many academicians and others adopted them as areas of interest as an act of self-definition and self-awareness. We are not surprised, as Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, once pointed out, that Jews and Christians frequently study the Hebrew Bible and that Muslims and Buddhists rarely do. Jewish history and philosophy, and perhaps Talmud, too, can certainly be studied by non-Jews, but many Jewish scholars of Jewish disciplines would claim that their own study of Judaism is different in some way from that of non-Jews.
15. My colleague Rabbi Shalom Carmy has stressed this aspect of modern scholarship on a number of occasions, most recently and extensively in “To Get the Better of Words: An Apology for *Yir’at Shamayim* in Academic Jewish Studies,” *The Torah u-Madda Journal* 2 (1990): 7–24. This is not the place to engage in close analysis of the position he establishes there or in full-scale discussion of this issue, although the matter demands fuller treatment than this note, and I hope to return to it at some future date. Suffice it to say that for our purposes the use of “the term *yir’at shamayim* as a synecdoche for that entire spectrum of religious experience which comes under the aspect of inwardness” and the characterization of “an orientation to *yir’at shamayim* so defined as a ‘theological’ approach” (p. 9) are far too

imprecise even to discuss the relative value or importance of *yir'at shamayim* and scholarship. The terms are simply incommensurate. The blame for the absence of "serious theological reflection" (*ibid.*) from some unspecified realm is not, in my view, to be laid at the door of academic Jewish scholarship. As I indicate below, *yir'at shamayim* is an indispensable mindset for the Orthodox Jewish scholar of Jewish studies if he/she is not to be schizophrenic, but it cannot be set up as the antithesis of academic scholarship. Different individuals possess different skills, different tastes, different interests, and different programmatic goals. Rabbi Carmy's agenda seems particularly appropriate for intellectually open individuals who choose to operate within a somewhat closed environment, such as Yeshiva University. My purpose is to raise the question for people who have chosen to participate in the larger scholarly arena as I have argued earlier (and as Rabbi Carmy would agree). But, whereas his remarks on the indubitable significance of *yir'at shamayim* are certainly worthy of reflection for both scholar and layman, his remarks about "acceptability in the world of university Bible scholarship" (p. 12) and about the concerns of Orthodox biblical scholars for recognition in the academic world (p. 17), while warning of situations which ought to be avoided, do not furnish guidance to those who choose to operate in that more open scholarly arena. Given Rabbi Carmy's concerns, it is not inappropriate to quote him, quoting Dr. Lamm, "*yeder darshan darshent far zich*" (p. 18), and we all demonstrate by our choices the profound truth in the rabbinic statement, *ein adam lommed ella be-makom she-libbo hafez*.

16. "Manifestations of Torah" is perhaps too strong a term. We could ask whether the study of Akkadian or of the economic profile of sixteenth-century Salonika is Torah, and I think that the answer must be in the negative. But both belong, in differing degrees, to the category which we might call, after its rabbinic analogue, *hekhsher* of biblical study or early modern Jewish history, respectively (the study of Akkadian is far more beneficial to proper study of *Tanakh*, which is undoubtedly Torah, than Salonikan economics is to the Torah aspect of Jewish history). The question of whether a discipline ancillary to the study of Torah is Torah or not is perhaps ultimately to be answered only by the connection between the heart and mind of its student.
17. My impression is that many of the *semikhah* students at the Bernard Revel Graduate School who major in Medieval Jewish History are really students of Medieval Rabbinic Literature in its various forms, but they are not interested in history, strictly speaking. The academic medieval Jewish historian must be sufficiently well-trained in general medieval history and thought in order to succeed at his/her craft. The same is not necessarily true of the potential *mehannekh*. *Ve-hamevin yavin*.
18. Of course, just what sort of scholarship might eventually impinge on the halakhic process might be a matter of dispute. The position of Hazon Ish on the applicability of manuscript discoveries to *psak* is well-known. For thorough discussions, see S.Z. Leiman, "Hazon Ish on Textual Criticism—A Rejoinder," *Tradition* 19 (1981): 301–10, and Daniel Sperber's Orthodox Forum essay, "On the Legitimacy, or Indeed Necessity, of Scientific Disciplines for True 'Learning' of the Talmud" [typescript], 18–21 and 34–38, nn. 39–50. Cases where *piskei halakhah* through the ages may have been based on incorrect conceptions of rabbinic *realia* form another area in which *poskim* could choose to innovate. But the mechanics of *psak* are currently insulated, to a large degree, from the data of scholarship. Ironically, if Torah u-Madda is successful in bridging the gap between the library and the *bet midrash*, it may provide the *posek* with a dilemma: "what shall I do in light of new information?" On the other hand, scholarship which is grounded in literary theory, such as source-critical analysis of talmudic texts, is far less likely to have much impact on the mindset of *poskim*. Cf. Sperber,

12–17, citing the views of R. Y.Y. Weinberg on talmudic stratigraphy, particularly his conclusion that Rabbi Weinberg dismissed the dangers of such methodology because “it was his view that such ‘discoveries’ do not affect practical halacha, as already established by the classical *poskim* (p. 14).” Cf. also his citation of B. De Vries’ comments regarding R. David Zevi Hoffmann’s objections to J.H. Duenner’s *Hagahot (Hiddushei Ha-Rizad* [Jerusalem, 1981], I, 31). De Vries concludes that “in practice we accept the *psak* as it is derived from the *sugya*, and as it evolved into its final form.” Sperber seems not to have taken a position in this paper on the *halakhah le-ma’aseh* ramifications of this method, while concluding (p. 17) that it is methodologically legitimate “where practiced with wisdom, respect and restraint.” For a recent discussion of contemporary literary talmudic research in the context of traditional *lernen*, see Y. Elman’s Orthodox Forum contribution, “Progressive *Derash* and Retrospective *Peshat*: Non-Halakhic Considerations in Talmud Torah.”

19. I suspect that one of the factors which impels such fears is the abuse and misuse of talmudic and rabbinic scholarship which has become part of the “halakhic process” as practiced in Conservative Judaism.
20. There is a well-known analogue to this situation in the study of legal methodology in other contexts and cultures. (For my further remarks here, I am indebted to information and analysis supplied by my former student Rabbi Michael Broyde of the Department of Religion and the Law School at Emory University.) “[Law schools] taught legal method, legal reasoning, analytical skills, how to take cases apart, and how to put them together again. Legal scholars and lawyers were interested in precedents, but not in history; they . . . used the past, but rarely treated it with the rigor that history demands.” These remarks, with which Lawrence M. Friedman prefaces his standard work, *A History of American Law* (New York, 1973), 9–10, to explain why American legal history was a neglected field, could easily be paralleled by an author comparing classical *lomdus* and historical disciplines involving the very same source materials. Friedman continues, “This is a *social* history of American law. . . . [it] treats American law, then, not as a kingdom unto itself, not as a set of rules and concepts, . . . but as a mirror of society. It takes nothing as historical accident, nothing as autonomous, everything as relative and molded by economy and society.” These two approaches, the legal historian’s and the lawyer’s, present two different sets of appropriate questions to be asked of a legal text, e.g., the American Constitution: the historical and the analytical. In the first instance, what was the law at a given period in history, and what factors, events, personalities, etc. influenced its development? The legal historian asks time-bound and source-based questions, pertaining not to the meaning of the text legally and objectively, but to its interpretation through the generations. In the second, what should the law be? Members of the analytic school (lawyers) ask what a particular clause or word means *as a matter of law*. Their assertions may be made with no textual or historical support, but only with the logical analysis akin to *sevarah* in *lomdus*. The second approach fundamentally views all sources anhistorically.
21. There may be seen here an echo of the rabbinic dicta “*shiv'im panim la-Torah*” and “*ein mikra yozei midei peshuto*” as they pertain to biblical material. On *peshat* and *derash* as operative concepts in talmudic study, cf. Elman’s Orthodox Forum essay (above n. 18).
22. There are highly regarded centrist Orthodox *roshei yeshiva* who are in favor of Torah u-Madda, but only in academic disciplines outside of Jewish studies. While receptive to the value and method of academic scholarship in other fields, they defend, for example, the inapplicability of literary scholarship to Bible on the grounds that *Tanakh* is *sui generis*, that as divine communication to man it cannot be judged by canons which were developed for reading human creative endeavor.

Talmudic scholarship, too, is tarred by a similar, if less appropriate, brush. Such definition is meant to elevate the texts beyond the pale of "criticism," but may actually have, in the minds of many, the opposite effect, preventing God's words or those of our Sages from being engaged by the full range of our intellectual capabilities. It is difficult to know whether this stance is generated by the "yir'at shamayim" factor, or by the uneasiness with the delicate and hazardous entry part way from the *bet midrash* into the library when full entry might be spiritually deleterious, or by the feeling that academic talmudic study will somehow damage classical *lernen* or relativize our understanding of *psak halakhah*. Too often, these positions are stated as fiat, undebatable, and almost, to borrow a term popularized by right-wing Orthodoxy, as "*da'as Torah*." The image of our commitment which is projected to the external observer is that of weakness, not strength, as if the only way to grapple with certain types of problems is to turn our backs on them and hide our heads in the sand. The limitation of Torah u-Madda to non-Torah areas comes very close to making a mockery of the entire enterprise, and, more significantly, gives the impression to the non-traditional world that we, who apparently accept the importance and validity of scholarship in many other sectors, are more than reluctant to test Torah by the same standards for fear that our tradition be found wanting.

23. See, for example, S. Carmy, "R. Yehiel Weinberg's Lecture on Academic Jewish Scholarship," *Tradition* 24:4 (Summer 1989): 15-23. R. Chayes, I believe, is the only *aharon* printed in the Vilna Shas who held a Ph.D. degree. To the degree that Torah u-Madda has a Hirschian Torah 'im Derekh Erez pedigree, as well as a *Wissenschaft des Judentums* one, it contains seeds of anti-*Wissenschaft*. Cf. N. Lamm, *Torah Umadda* (Northvale, 1990), 111-25 and 186-92 for the relationship of Hirsch to current Torah u-Madda thinking. Whereas it is certainly excessively parochial to speak of the "ultimate goal of Torah 'im Derekh Erez [as] the development of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, or the academic study of Judaica" (*ibid.*, 188, paraphrasing the view of Professor Zev Falk), the more Hirschian approach, focusing Torah u-Madda on the *ballebos* in the street and not on the *lamdan/academician*, lacks a rigorous substructure, as Lamm's critique of Hirsch indicates.
24. This is not the place to digress on this very significant question, but attention ought to be drawn to a panel discussion held at the December 1985 meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies on the topic "Biblical Studies and Jewish Studies in the University." The participants were Jon D. Levenson (then of the University of Chicago Divinity School, currently of Harvard Divinity School), Michael Fishbane (then of Brandeis University, currently of the University of Chicago Divinity School), and James Kugel (of Harvard). Their remarks were printed in the *AJS Newsletter* 36 (Fall, 1986): 16-24, and they are well worth reading. Kugel has written further on a related subject in his "The Bible in the University," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*, eds. W.H. Propp, B. Halpern, and D.N. Freedman (Winona Lake, 1990), 143-65. There is no doubt that Christian biases have often impinged on the location of biblical studies in American universities. First, the Bible means to Christians both our *Tanakh* and their own Christian Scriptures, and in that form certainly is not a part of Jewish Studies. Second and more significant, since, for many of them, they, and not we, are the true heirs of biblical Israel, the academic treatment of the Bible must remain independent from academic Jewish Studies. As a result, Bible tends to be found in departments of religion rather than those of Jewish Studies. Levenson has written several articles in recent years demonstrating the frequent anti-Jewish bias in Protestant (particularly German) biblical scholarship of the last century, e.g., "The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament, and Historical Criticism," in *The Future of Biblical Studies: The Hebrew Scriptures*, eds. R.E. Friedman and H.G.M. Williamson

- (Atlanta, 1987), 19–59. The question of the existence of a “Jewish school of biblical studies” is considered by J. Neusner and E.S. Frerichs in the Preface and Introduction to *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel*, eds. J. Neusner, B.A. Levine, and E.S. Frerichs (Philadelphia, 1987), ix–xii and 1–6, respectively.
25. The absence of precursors in this area, compared even with that of *bayit sheni*/Talmud as described above, is significant. We have had fewer models to emulate in the practice of biblical scholarship. The subject matter is dogmatically more delicate, the questions raised are stronger, and the answers are weaker. This should, rather than discouraging us, challenge us to devote more of our communal intellectual energy to developing the proper mode in which to engage in the discipline. Of course, sociology is frequently the *posek aharon*, and I seriously doubt whether, had he been alive today, R. David Zevi Hoffmann would have been uncriticized for practicing the scholarship which he did, attempting to grapple with the school of Wellhausen on its own ground, and furnishing one of the few models for our generation of a genuine search for *peshuto shel mikra* in the fullest sense. Thus A. Wasserteil, the translator of Hoffmann’s commentary to Genesis (Bnei Brak, 1969) writes, “Regarding the author’s polemic against Bible critics, I was very pressed to omit it entirely, . . . because Torah scholars . . . are not interested in this sort of thing and also see a fault in engaging in it” (pp. 5–6). Nevertheless, continues the translator, he removed the debate with the Bible critics from the text and moved it into the notes so that the reader of the commentary could run through the text unoffended. Had Hoffmann lived today, would not some “*gedolim*” and purveyors of popular Judaica have attempted to convince him not to include that material in the first place? Can we imagine in the late twentieth century a *gadol* with the training and inclination to publish, in whatever vernacular, a work like *Die wichtigsten Instanzen gegen die Graf-Wellhausensche Hypothese* (Berlin, 1904) [= ראיות מכריעות נגד ולהויון זר, tr. E. Barishansky (Jerusalem, 1928)]?
26. The question of our existence can be divided into two parts, and Professor B. Barry Levy of McGill University in his Orthodox Forum contribution, “The State of Orthodox Biblical Studies” [typescript], does just that, devoting the first subsection of his discussion to “Who or What is Orthodox?” (pp. 1–4) and the second to “What Is Biblical Studies?” (pp. 4–5). He openly asks what is it which defines a scholar or his work as Orthodox, going as far as to present a list of contemporary scholars and to ask whether “[their work] . . . be considered Orthodox?” and entertaining the possibility that “Orthodox authors sometimes write un-Orthodox books . . .” (p. 2). He suggests that “whether or not history ultimately finds for their Orthodoxy or for that of their books, the border-line cases help define the outer limits of Orthodox Bible study.” My initial difficulty with his approach is that, first of all, I do not believe that we can or should distinguish the Orthodoxy of the scholarly persona from the Orthodoxy of his or her scholarly oeuvre, and second, although marginality may indeed aid us in determining, in some sense, those “outer limits,” some of Levy’s examples belong to categories which I believe we should exclude from the present discussion (see next note). I should prefer to work from within as far as we can towards those limits, rather than from those limits inward. Levy, who certainly can be judged to know who “we” are, writes nevertheless, “[Orthodox biblical scholars] are an endangered species (at least in North America). . . . (p. 2)” and “We can count on the fingers of one hand the Orthodox North American scholars who regularly write about . . . the primary concerns of the academic field of Biblical Studies” (p. 5). He therefore opts, for the purposes of his essay, for “a broader definition of Biblical Studies that includes learned contributions of many types and is not limited to the academic field of the same name.” Despite their obvious relevance to my comments in this section of my essay, a deservedly full discussion of his

remarks will have to be postponed to another context. Professor Levy's essay is based in part on his forthcoming article, "On the Periphery: North American Orthodox Judaism and Contemporary Biblical Scholarship," in *Jewish Bible Scholarship in America*, edited by B.A. Levine and D. Sperling.

27. I must stress that I am excluding from consideration what I call "the schizophrenic Orthodox scholar" who keeps his views on scholarship far from his *shtiebel*, or the Israeli who might begin his lecture at the Hebrew University (according to a perhaps apocryphal story) with the words, "*im yirzeh Hashem, ha-yom netakken mah she-haser be-tekst ha-mikra'i*," (today, with God's help, we shall repair what is missing in the biblical text") or the observant non-Orthodox one, who lives a Torah-observant life-style which is belied and contradicted by his research, publication and teaching, as well as his own dogmatic/theological stance. I am concerned with the religious individual whose scholarship, although objective, is not totally divorced from himself or his beliefs.
28. Rabbi Breuer's views were first disseminated in a pair of identically-titled articles, "Emunah u-Madda be-Farshanut ha-Mikra," *De'ot* 11-12 (1959-60) which received considerable reaction and response in the ensuing issue of that journal. The results of his analysis are to be found in the two volumes of *Pirkei Mo'adot* (corrected edition; Jerusalem, 1989). Their theoretical underpinnings are laid out in the introduction, "הפשוטות המיוחדות בכל יום," *ibid.*, 11-22. Further elaboration and development were presented by Rabbi Breuer in his Orthodox Forum presentation, a Hebrew essay responding to the conference query "How should Bible be studied by serious individuals or groups who recognize the primacy of Yir'at Shamayim in their studies?" I shall comment on Rabbi Breuer's approach below, pp. 23-24.
29. S.A. Kaufman, "Rhetoric, Redaction, and Message in Jeremiah," *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (above, n. 24), 64, calls Yehezkel Kaufmann, whose attitude to the Torah was certainly not traditional, a "crypto-fundamentalist(!)." Alan Cooper writes that he was asked by a colleague whether he "'accepted' Wellhausen" because he was suspected of being a "closet fundamentalist (that is, using literary criticism to make fundamentalism respectable)." See his "On Reading the Bible Critically and Otherwise," in *The Future of Biblical Studies: The Hebrew Scriptures* (above n. 24), 61. It is quite clear that modern scholars, too, have their inviolable 'ikkarim, just as traditional Jews do. On the other hand, the "literary" approach, with its holistic overtones, does threaten classic biblical criticism to a certain degree. To perceive wholeness in a text is to deny the obviousness of its fragmentary nature, and to refer all of the literary artistry of a text consistently to the redactor eventually turns him into the author of the work. This point has already been made by David Berger in remarks (*Commentary* 61:3 [1976]: 16) directed at Robert Alter's early foray into "Bible as literature," "You can allow the 'redactor' just so much freedom of action before he turns into an author using various traditions as 'raw material'." (Cited in D. Berger, "On the Morality of the Patriarchs in Jewish Polemic and Exegesis," in C. Thoma and M. Wyschogrod, eds., *Understanding Scripture: Explorations of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation* [New York, 1987], 58.) Cf. also the remarks of John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Philadelphia, 1984), 56-58, entitled "The Disappearing Redactor." The issue, from the standpoint of the scholarly literature, is far from settled, but the literary approach has spawned interest and concern beyond the circles of its followers.
30. Rashbam, *Commentary* to Genesis 37:2, referring to his assertion that his grandfather, Rashi, would have liked the opportunity to revise his Torah commentary in light of the "interpretations which are (re)discovered each day."
31. For a brief discussion of similarities and differences, see, for example, S. Rozik, "mi-Darkei ha-Midrash u-mi-Darkei ha-Sifrut be-Farshanut ha-Mikra," *Bet*

- Mikra* 21 (1976): 71–78. The literature on the relationship between midrash and certain hyper-modern literary approaches has grown in the last ten years; some of the analogies are somewhat exaggerated.
32. I shall address further certain aspects of this issue in a review of R. Alter and F. Kermode, *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, 1987) which will appear in *Tradition*. Some of the language of the last two paragraphs will sound familiar to the readers of that review.
 33. For those who require גדולים להחלוח בהם, cf., for example, the remarks of Abravanel in the Introduction to his commentary to *Nevi'im Rishonim* and the comments of R. Yosef Kara at I Samuel 9:9, the full remarks of Ibn Ezra and Malbim in the Introductions to their commentaries on Psalms, and the comments of Ibn Ezra at Isaiah 40:1. As for the variant texts, they fall into the category of אין לדין אלא מה שענין ראות, should we feel obligated or choose to look in their direction.
 34. U. Simon, "le-Darkah shel ha-Maḥlakah le-Tanakh be-Universitat Bar-Ilan," *De'ot* 49 (1982): 234. The article is one of three in that issue which deal with the topic of biblical research and teaching in a religious university. Some of my remarks in this essay find parallels in his, although we are not in full agreement.
 35. No doubt, not all of Breuer's interpretations are forced and unsuccessful, and he has probably furnished a correct reading and interpretation for more than one passage. But his method is predicated on an all-or-nothing approach; if it fails anywhere, it fails everywhere. The stakes of a traditional response to higher criticism are too high to be gambled on such an uncertain wager.
 36. Levy (above n. 26), 25, asserts, in a similar vein, "distinction must be made between confirmed facts and speculation." David Shatz has dealt with some of the theoretical epistemological underpinnings of this stance in "Practical Endeavor and the Torah u-Madda Debate" elsewhere in this issue of *The Torah u-Madda Journal* [pp. 98–149], particularly "II. On Some Alleged Inconsistencies." Most significant for our purposes is his honest emphasis on the fact that certain challenges to the anti-Torah u-Madda camp confront us as well. We, too, are admittedly inconsistent in, to use an example from my own discussion, our non-blanket acceptance of the results of academic biblical scholarship. Yet I believe that we must use the method up to the point where it runs up against our axiomatic presuppositions. Along the way, as Shatz points out, we can employ the methodology of *madda* itself in our critique of some of its results. This approach is not available to the non-Torah u-Madda school. In our search for overall coherence, we attempt to harmonize as much as possible the results of our Torah and our *madda*. When we can no longer do so, we do not throw out whatever we have accomplished to that point, but leave it for the next investigator to pick it up and carry it forward. Shatz refers to the epistemological principle involved in this overall stance as "giv[ing] credence to science but insist[ing] on priority for Torah . . . as Torah u-Madda advocates should do when push finally comes to shove and *madda* threatens inalienable Torah beliefs. . . . At all points everyone must be prepared to reject some of *madda*'s conclusions if necessary, even in the absence of a *madda*-based critique" [p. 105]. My own distinction between methodology and presuppositions amounts, in the end, to a very similar position.
 37. Yaakov Elman's Orthodox Forum essay (above, n. 18) furnishes a fine delineation of the elements which are demanded by the pursuit of *peshat*. Although his focus is Talmud, almost everything in his description is equally applicable to Bible. "To arrive at the plain meaning of the texts, both traditional learning and academic study require an accurate knowledge of their provenance in every sense of the word: their historical provenance . . . political, cultural, religious, socioeconomic, including matters of realia; their linguistic, geographic provenance; it requires concern for form-critical and source-critical matters; it requires first and foremost

establishing a text, and thus brings text-critical matters into its purview" (p. 31 of typescript). All of these, with the exception of pentateuchal source-criticism, might find their place in Orthodox biblical study.

38. It is for his setting an example in confronting these large issues that we must admire and congratulate Rabbi Breuer. Although, to my mind, he has not yet found the answers which we all seek, he has already encouraged others to follow his lead in searching for them, and, as a result, will be entitled to share in the credit if, and when, they are ultimately found.
39. Levy (above n. 26), 3.
40. In this context, it is important to draw the American reader's attention to an Israeli Orthodox approach to biblical studies, standing on the line between traditional study and modern scholarship, which finds its expression in some of the better volumes of the *Da'at Mikra* series and in the creative journal *Megadim* published by the *Makhon Ya'akov Herzog le-Hakhsharat Morim* at Yeshivat Har Etzion. These are *not* the ideal models for Orthodox biblical scholarship as I project it, although Levy (above n. 26), 9, is correct to describe the former series as "the best twentieth-century Orthodox commentary approaching coverage of the entire Bible," and some of the articles in the latter periodical are as fine as any in "standard" biblical journals. Both of them are quite uncomfortable with confronting contemporary biblical scholarship face-to-face, and a variety of critical issues, both higher and lower, are studiously avoided. Once again, sociology may be the *posek*, and we must remember that Israeli and American Orthodoxies are not identical. The American scene may allow slightly more flexibility in developing a rigorous Orthodox approach to biblical studies than the Israeli, although in certain respects the Israelis appear to have more freedom. Levy concludes his Orthodox Forum piece with a challenging section, "Toward a Contemporary Orthodox Hermeneutic" (pp. 23–28), which will have to be taken into consideration in any further discussion of this topic.
41. I refer here to "we" as a group; it may be incumbent on our community to produce individuals who participate actively in the scholarly process. The *reshut* or *hovah* of the individual, however, must be moderated by *ein adam lomed ella be-makom she-libbo hafez*.
42. Lawrence Kaplan and David Berger, "On Freedom of Inquiry in the Rambam—And Today," *The Torah u-Madda Journal* 2 (1990): 47. See further their thoughtful remarks in n. 19, *ad loc.*, p. 50.